

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNING FUNCTIONAL AREA ANALYSIS

This report of the Functional Area Analysis (FAA) of the Northwestern Division (NWD) Planning structure and processes is submitted to the Regional Management Board (RMB) in response to their 28 October 1998 request. The results of the analysis provide a comprehensive strategy to preserve and enhance the planning capabilities of NWD, consistent with the Project Management Business Process (PMBP) and the need to preserve technical expertise. The FAA Team is headed by Tom Davis, NWD-ET-P, and includes representatives from Division Planning in Portland and Omaha and each of the five NWD Districts. The FAA is summarized in accordance with each topical area of the analysis: Structure and Function, Regionalization, Business Processes, Organizational Support and Training. A list of recommended actions by the appropriate action office are offered at the conclusion of the report.

Structure and Function. After extensive evaluation of each district organizational structure and the needs for preserving and enhancing a robust planning capability, it was concluded that a full function planning entity is critical to success. A robust Planning organization should include plan formulation, economic and environmental functional elements, with an interdisciplinary chief reporting to the Deputy for Programs and Project Management (DPPM). The Planning Chief should also be a member of the PRB and the Corporate Board to assure effective representation of the Civil Works programs, and be responsible for guiding Project Teams through the planning phase of projects.

In order to provide the necessary and appropriate support to the districts, it is logical that a similar division organization is appropriate.

Regionalization. At this time, each of the NWD districts has sufficient workload to support a full service planning organization with plan formulation, economic and environmental elements. When workload demands exceed district capability, virtual teaming has been employed by drawing on technical, quality control review and managerial services from other districts within and outside NWD.

Enhanced Careers. The ability to keep the best people involved in planning activities requires growth and development activities as well as grade parity between planners and project managers. Technical specialist GS-13 positions would provide career progression for experts in a given technical area.

An additional consideration is the development of NWD Planning Achievement Awards to recognize excellent individual and team performance in planning programs.

Business Processes. A number of existing business processes should be streamlined. This includes delegated approval of a number of planning products such as PSP's, PCA's and 905(b) reports.

Quarterly review meetings between division and district staff should be continued to identify and resolve issues and problems early in the planning process. Quarterly Planning Chiefs meetings should be held to further develop the region -wide team and share information.

The Chief of Planning at each district should be designated as the POC for all policy issues. A policy conference should be held annually to facilitate discussion of critical policy issues.

Internet applications of the districts should be expanded to include formulation and innovative planning examples, lessons learned and full service Civil Works Programs marketing information. An example is the current NWO Web site posted under "About our Services", "Civil Works".

The HQ Planning Division Home Page or Policy Division site should include case studies of innovative and creative plan formulation efforts. A Planner's Bulletin Board for items of interest should be developed, and an Email discussion group to address various plan formulation issues and problems or new initiatives such as watershed planning should also be promoted.

The division office should provide and maintain a current list of AE contracts (IDT's). These contracts should be negotiated such that any Corps District can access the AE.

The negotiation of non-model cost-sharing agreements with sponsors should be modified to include face-to-face issue resolution with the Washington Review Center decision-makers and the sponsor at an early stage in the negotiations.

Resolution of HQUSACE review comments should include informal discussions between the parties prior to sending formal comments to the field.

Organizational Support. The Planning entity should be involved in activities in addition to the traditional Civil Works missions in the interest of efficiency. This is particularly appropriate when available Planning skills and capabilities are duplicated by other district elements or acquired from other sources. This is specifically relevant in the areas of Regulatory, Dam Safety, Major Rehabilitation and Support for Others. This involvement would help sustain planning technical expertise.

Training. Adequate training and development opportunities are critical to the growth and enhancement of planning technical expertise.

Re-establishment of the Planners and Project Managers Program, if centrally funded, would be extremely effective in meeting these goals.

Developmental training programs should be supported at the districts for junior planners, at districts and HQ for more advanced planners and at the interagency level for planning executives.

The FAA Team recognizes the value of division-hosted workshops to discuss timely topics or issues (i.e., watershed studies, Sec. 1135/206 projects).

Planning Functional Area Analysis

Table of Contents	Page
Purpose and Introduction.....	1
Structure and Function.....	2
Regionalization.....	4
Enhanced Careers	4
Business Processes	5
Organizational Support.....	9
Training	9
Conclusions.....	11
Recommendations.....	13
Postscript.....	16

Enclosures

1. Regional Management Board Meeting Minutes, 27-28 October 1998
2. Mike White Slides - Planning Process Review for NWD
3. CENWD-NP-PM 17 Nov 1998 letter, Planning and the Project Management Business Process (PMBP)
4. Logan Creswell, NWD-HR guidance
5. Logan Creswell, NWD-HR and Joe Levy, CEHR (HQ) guidance
6. Guidance on Chief of Planning as a CP-18 interdisciplinary position from Fred Caver and Susan Duncan
7. Mike White's suggestion that Chief of Planning be member of PRB

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